

## China: Journals Urge Use of Overseas Scientists for Technology Transfer

Two PRC government-sponsored science policy journals recommend that China increase its use of overseas Chinese scientists to transfer foreign technology back to China. The journals specifically endorse building databases of ethnic Chinese scientists overseas, tasking these scientists with research of interest to Beijing, and maintaining secrecy through the use of intermediaries and third countries.

Articles in Beijing's *Keyan Guanli* and Guangzhou's *Keji Guanli Yanjiu*, two authoritative PRC science and technology (S&T) policy journals, recommend that China ramp up its use of ethnic Chinese scientists abroad to transfer foreign technology in support of Beijing's efforts to improve its "strategic status."

A long article in the July 2001 issue of *Keyan Guanli*-a bimonthly journal of the Chinese Academy of Science's Institute of S&T Policy and Management Studies-titled "Development and Utilization of Overseas Chinese Experts"-outlines a 14-point program to "more effectively utilize" overseas Chinese scientists and "persuade them to make contributions in various ways to China's science and technology development." The article begins by emphasizing the need to treat Chinese scientists abroad on an equal footing with those who return to China. Recognizing their potential as "overseas talent resources," the article recommends that "more opportunities and conduits be provided" for use in policy planning and in building a "high-level information bridge" between Chinese scientists abroad and their PRC counterparts.

One such conduit, referred to in the article as a "dual bases" model, aims to "promote the organized cooperation of overseas Chinese scholars' foreign endeavors with PRC scientific research programs." By having one "base" in China and the other abroad, overseas experts can be given "a sense of direction for serving China in a deep, sustainable and efficient manner." Parties to the process would "progressively transfer their foreign research programs back to China" or contribute to "sensitive research topics of national importance" from their vantage point overseas.

The article goes as far as to endorse tasking overseas Chinese with specific research projects, noting for example, "When conditions permit, urgent domestic research topics can be selected, R&D organizations can be set up in the foreign countries, and first-rate overseas Chinese experts can be invited to participate in them as financially sponsored projects. The final research results will go back to China."

Greater coordination in recruitment, however, is needed to "realize full utilization of China's overseas talent base," according to the article. A lack of common focus is noted in independent programs run by the Ministries of Science and Technology, Education, and Personnel; by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the China National Science Foundation Management Committee, the State Bureau of Foreign Experts, and the State Council's Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs; and by provincial and municipal organizations, especially in

Beijing, Dalian, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Shenzhen. These operations, in *Keyan Guanli's* estimate, should be coordinated by an "Overseas Chinese Experts Recruitment Advisory Committee," established under the State Council, to direct "the nation's overall requirements on the recruitment mission and set up an integrated strategic program to attract overseas Chinese experts."

Recruitment would further benefit from an "Overseas Chinese Experts Data Center" operated by the Science Ministry, fed by multiple sources, and organized by region, country, and profession "into a sharable overseas Chinese experts data resources system." The article recommends that these data be collected through "privately owned service organizations supported by the state," over Internet websites hosted in China and the target country, by "the private sector's foreign offices," and by science attaches in embassies and consulates, who are to "strengthen contacts with overseas Chinese S&T societies and track down information on overseas Chinese professionals."

To manage liaison with overseas Chinese S&T groups, *Keyan Guanli* recommends forming in all major developed countries "China S&T Development Overseas Advisory Committees" whose mission is "building extensive contacts, congregating overseas Chinese experts, and soliciting their contributions for China's science and technology." Association members would be encouraged to attend seminars in the PRC, "introduce information on the most recent S&T and industrial developments," and participate in China's S&T programs in other ways while "interacting directly with corresponding PRC agencies" and their own scientific counterparts.

A final recommendation made in the *Keyan Guanli* article concerns the need to maintain secrecy through intermediaries and "acting without talking." Given that "recruitment of overseas Chinese experts is strongly related to the policies and sensitivities" of the nation targeted, the article says particular attention should be paid "to developing private sector intermediary organizations and international talent exchange associations." Those involved in "sensitive areas" of technology transfer, it warns, must "avoid broadcasting the recruitment and cooperation accomplishments in foreign and domestic news media, giving away leads, and creating an awkward situation" for the overseas participants.

A second article published in the October 2001 issue of *Keji Guanli Yanjiu*-a bimonthly journal of the government of Guangdong Province covering science and technology activities in Guangdong-titled "International S&T Cooperation Environment and Measures for Guangdong Province"-lists ten measures needed to promote the growth of the S&T industry in Guangdong. The first three directly involve the use of overseas Chinese scientists.

Specifically, the article recommends providing financial support for "recruiting and utilizing overseas S&T-qualified personnel" and for sponsoring various types of activities for overseas Chinese S&T associations abroad, such as opening dedicated high-tech zones and "recruiting overseas Chinese scientists to start businesses." Mirroring *Keyan Guanli's* earlier proposal, the Guangdong-based journal endorses building an "international S&T personal information data bank, an overseas Chinese experts data bank, and supporting systems for information networks and decisions." The journal also recommends that intellectual property rights and

US export restrictions be bypassed through the use of a "multi-technology enterprise strategy" and by channeling restricted technology through Canada and Mexico.

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